

The Cupola

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Pardee Home Museum

MARCH 2003

Oakland City
Landmark 1975
National Register of
Historic Places 1976
California Historic
Landmark 1998

100th Anniversary of Pardee's Inauguration Celebrated in Grand Style at the Museum

With the assistance of a generous grant from the Living History Centre of Marin County, the Pardee Home hosted an elegant candlelight soiree on January 4, marking the 100th anniversary of the Pardee family's departure from Oakland for the inauguration of George Pardee's four-year tenure as governor of California. Our 65 guests assembled at six o'clock for wine and hors d'oeuvres and to await the arrival in the main hallway of actors portraying Governor-elect Pardee, his wife and four daughters, and Aunt Etta, the girls' governess. Following the Pardees' greetings, all the guests presented their calling cards to the butler to begin a formal reception line before entering the dining room for a lavish buffet. Dessert service and coffee preceded the farewell champagne toast to George Pardee, offered by his longtime political confidante, William Baldwin.

With the exception of some overheard complaints from George to Helen Pardee during the reception line about the five or so women guests who questioned him about his silence on the women's suffrage issue, we can confidently report that the soiree was undoubtedly the most splendid evening at the Pardee Home in many years. With live music on the harp by Liza Wallace and at the piano by Lynda MacNeil, and with flowers by Renwick and Wolfe, many guests were commenting that the gala was "perfect to the last detail!"

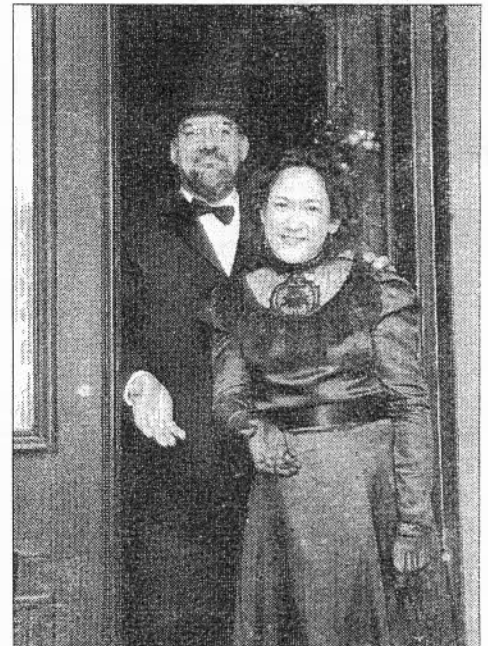
Very special thanks are due to our wonderful, volunteer service staff

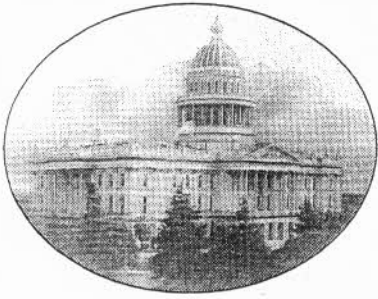


Pardee Home Museum

The four Pardee daughters and their Aunt Etta relax upstairs during the soiree, at top. The actors from left to right are Allison Love (Helen), Anastacia Love (Carol), Gena Hilliard (Florence), Ingrid Cornejo (Madeline), and Vicki Wiese (Aunt Etta). At right, David Nicolai and Karen McKinney portray Governor and Mrs. George C. Pardee.

who made possible a truly elegant evening under sometimes trying circumstances: Myra Rivas and Kevin Chak, Misty Snyder, Jack Steinmetz and Richard Hall, and, above all, Dawn Muller, who not only served during the buffet but who also single-handedly prepared delicious appetizers and desserts for over 60 guests! Margaret Love and Phyllis Brislaw are due special thanks for their extra efforts to assemble and outfit the four Pardee daughters.





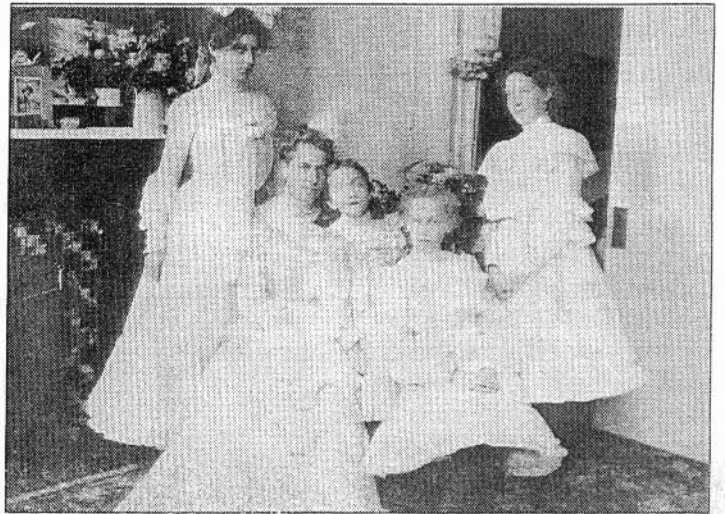
One hundred years ago

As promised in the last issue of *The Cupola*, we are featuring a new column, "100 Years Ago in Sacramento," recapping the highlights of George Pardee's four years as governor of California. The column will run for the next four years, and each column will cover three months of his tenure. This first one covers January, February, and March of 1903—a winter dominated by Pardee's inauguration, the search for suitable living quarters for the new governor and his family, and Mrs. Pardee's emergence as a leading social hostess, among other, more mundane political affairs...

George Pardee was inaugurated as governor on Wednesday afternoon, January 7. Before noon the outgoing Governor Gage had formally called on Pardee at his rooms in the Golden Eagle Hotel, and the two men then headed a grand military parade to the Capitol. *The Oakland Tribune*, describing the parade as the "largest of its kind in recent years in Sacramento," noted that Pardee "had no desire to have a large military or even civic display," but did not wish to seem "hostile to a custom which has been observed in this state on such occasions." If the coverage of the *San Francisco Chronicle* is to be believed, "the sun, which for the past four weeks has been trying to pierce the gloom of the skies, broke through just as Governor Pardee, with his hand upraised, took the oath of office" at 1:20 p.m. in the Assembly Chamber. He was inaugurated before members of both the Assembly and Senate, other dignitaries and close family, including all the Pardees.

The oath of office was immediately followed by Pardee's inaugural address, in which he pledged a "wise, careful, economical, but progressive administration," presented a well-informed account of conservation issues confronting the state, and promised to replenish the state's nearly bankrupt general fund. Much of his address, with its promise of a harmonious administration serving the interests of all California citizens, can be seen as a response to the scandal-ridden, outgoing administration of Henry Gage, as well as the persistent rumors during the recent campaign that Pardee was secretly "pro-Southern Pacific" and "anti-labor." The newspapers of the state, almost without exception, praised the speech as a "model of caution, moderation, and tact."

The inaugural ball was not held until Monday evening, January 12. Judging by newspapers' accounts from that time and from later years, it might well have been the grandest inaugural ball in California history.



From the collections of the Pardee Home Museum

The Pardee women dressed for the Inaugural Ball. From left, Miss Florence, in a "rose pink gown with transparent lace yoke and draped sleeves"; Mrs. Helen Pardee, "gowned in cream moiré with a long court train and an accordion-pleated chiffon flounce in front"; Miss Helen, in a "gas-light green silk dress with green ribbons in her hair"; Miss Carol, "attired in light blue silk"; and Miss Madeline, wearing "a white crepe dress with ruffles at the bottom, a high neck and long sleeves with white roses in her hair."

The gala was, remarkably enough, open to any member of the public who would pay the admission fee of \$10 "for a gentleman and lady" (about \$200 in today's money). It was praised on the front page of the *Oakland Enquirer* with these words: "In point of attendance, it was fully up to those of former administrations; in point of decorative features and music there were no apologies to offer; in point of fetching costumes and pretty women there was much to admire; but above all things else, so far as could be discovered by critical observers, there were none but ladies and gentlemen present. For this much commendation was given the general committee whose judgment in many delicate matters of taste and social etiquette had finally evolved an event which it was a positive pleasure to attend. And, further, instead of a supper of the six-course variety with wine and champagne as inducements to social indiscretions and unseemly hilarity, there were light refreshments and harmless punch."

The ball was held in the Capitol itself, which showcased the latest conveniences — the marble halls were

